Amendments to the Specification:

On page 1, after the title, insert the following new paragraph:

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is the U.S. national phase of PCT Application No. PCT/EP2004/007487 filed July 8, 2004, which claims priority to German application 103 32 623.5 filed July 17, 2003. The entire disclosures of each of these applications is hereby incorporated by reference.

At page 1, line 3, please add the following heading and subheading as shown below:

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

At page 1, line 6, please add the following subheading as shown below:

2. Description of the Related Art

At page 7, line 9, please add the following heading as shown below:

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

At page 7, line 22, please add the following heading as shown below:

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S)

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 6, as shown below:

It is also possible to use, as alternatives for genes which encode a lipoylatable polypeptide, alleles of genes which originally encoded a biotinylatable polypeptide (e.g. BCCP) but which can now, after minor sequence variation, also encode polypeptides which can be lipoylated (e.g. BCCP DASMEP). Such a gene comprises a DNA fragment which has the sequence SEQ ID NO: 5 and which encodes a polypeptide having the sequence SEQ ID NO: 6, or a DNA fragment which encodes a functional variant of this polypeptide which has a sequence identity with SEQ ID NO: 6 of greater than 75%.

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 27, as shown below:

In the present invention, all the values for the sequence identity of DNA sequences and amino acid sequences refer to results which are obtained using the BESTFIT algorithm (GCG Wisconsin Package, Genetics Computer Group ~~(GLG)~~ (GCG) Madison, Wisconsin).

Please amend the paragraph beginning at page 18, line 7, as shown below:

The R-α-lipoic acid which is produced in the method according to the invention is, for example, detected and quantified by means of a bioassay using an indicator strain (lipA mutant) which is auxotrophic for lipoic acid. This type of turbidimetric quantification of R-α-lipoic acid is known from the literature (Herbert and Guest, 1970, Meth. Enzymol. 18A, 269 272). However, the indicator strain W1485lip2 (ATCC 25645) which is used within the context of the present invention would also grow without any R-α-lipoic acid supplement if the medium also contained acetate and succinate in addition to glucose. In order to avoid a falsely positive growth of the indicator strain in the bioassay when determining the R-α-lipoic acid which has been produced, with the growth being caused, for example, by a charge of glucose and the acetate and succinate acids which have been secreted by the producer strain in addition to the R-α-lipoic acid, the R-α-lipoic acid producer is already preferably grown using succinate as the sole carbon source. This strain is supplemented with the culture supernatant from a cell growth in accordance with the invention; the growth of the indicator strain can then be used to determine the lipoic acid content in the culture medium.